

Event Planning Tips – Picnics

Planning an event can be a daunting task.

We hope these tips will assist you in making the process easier.

**If you need additional assistance, feel free to call us at
(800) 899-1140 or visit us at www.lifeofthepartyonline.com.**

1. **Date of the event:** When picking the date of your picnic, try to maximize your guests' availability. Take a brief survey to see if there are any major conflicting events. If you are scheduling your event for a holiday weekend, be aware that many people may be out of town. Because of this, people tend to adjust their parties to weekends before and after holiday weekends, making these alternate weekends particularly busy. If you are scheduling on one of these weekends, it is a good idea to plan and reserve everything early.
2. **Time of the event:** Picnics tend to be all day events. Schedule your picnic early so that most guests will have arrived by lunchtime (assuming you are planning to serve food). If you are planning a Sunday afternoon picnic, you may want to adjust the times if many of your guests are coming from church.
3. **Choosing a location:** Most company picnics take place at parks or beaches. Try to choose a park with plenty of shade if you are planning a summertime event. Other things to consider include: how crowded is the park? Is there enough parking? Does the park require parking fees, and if so, will your organization be paying for this? Do you need to reserve a picnic site? How early do you need to reserve a picnic site to insure availability? Does the park offer activities (eg. playground) to help keep the kids busy?
4. **Choosing a theme:** Themes can greatly enhance your event. Choosing a theme can help you decide on party favors, decorations, and entertainment. Popular themes include: western, Hawaiian, renaissance, etc. You can even choose a theme based on your line of work
5. **Create a budget:** Picnics can run the gamut for expenses. Knowing your budget will help you determine how elaborate you can make your picnic. *Costs to consider include:* food, utensils, decorations, facility rental, entertainment / equipment rentals, etc.
6. **Guest Lists / Invitations:** The invitations are your first opportunity to build excitement for the upcoming event. You can tie the artwork of the invitations to reflect the theme of your event. The invitations should include the date, time, and location. A map can also be quite helpful. An RSVP will help you anticipate

your headcount. Finally, you may want to publish your itinerary on your invitations to help insure your guests will arrive in a timely manner.

7. **Event Itinerary:** Developing an outline for your event can help keep everything running smoothly. Some sample itineraries might be helpful for your event. Keep in mind that your outline should be used as a guideline, and schedules rarely work out exactly as planned. In fact, it is sometimes a good idea to have some padding in the schedule just in case things run behind schedule.

Sample Itinerary – Standard Picnic

11:00 Guests Arrive / Check in
 Strolling / Background Entertainment:
 Caricature Artist
 Balloon Artist
 Close-up magician
 Face Painter
 Fortune Teller
 DJ or Band
 Rides (eg. moon bounce, inflatable slide, train, etc.)
11:30 – 1:30 Lunch
12:30 – 1:00 Family Show (eg. magic or puppet)
 1:00 – 3:30 Games Master to run family picnic games
 2:30 – 4:00 Softball or volleyball
 3:45 – 4:45 Bingo or raffle

Sample Itinerary – Emergency Services Picnic (Hospitals, etc)

For organizations that must remain open preventing the entire staff from attending the same time. Picnic time 10:30 – 5:30 with 2 shifts.

10:30 1st Shift Arrives / Check in
 Strolling / Background Entertainment:
 Caricature Artist
 Balloon Artist
 Close-up magician
 Face Painter
 Fortune Teller
 DJ or Band
 Rides (eg. moon bounce, inflatable slide, train, etc.)
11:00 – 1:00 Lunch
11:30 – 12:00 Family Show (eg. magic or puppet)
12:30 – 2:00 Games Master to run family picnic games
 2:00 – 2:30 Break / Shift Transition
2:30 2nd Shift Arrives / Check in
 Strolling / Background Entertainment Continues
2:30 – 5:00 Food Served
3:00 – 3:30 Family Show (eg. magic or puppet)
4:00 – 5:15 Games Master to run family picnic games

Please note that these are sample itineraries.

We suggest that you create a schedule that meets your needs.

8. **Hiring Entertainment:** Decide early what kind of entertainment you want. Then reserve it. Make sure you are working with a reputable company. Companies that emphasize high quality often book up during peak times, so we recommend that you book early if quality is important to you. Weekend afternoons between June and September are peak times for company picnics. While a good company can sometimes handle last minute bookings, we recommend scheduling your entertainment 6 or more weeks in advance to help ensure availability.
9. **Food-** There are several options available if you are planning to feed your guests (listed least expensive to most desirable):
- Have the guests bring food (either potluck style or bring your own food).
 - Have ready made food available (eg. pizza or subway sandwich).
 - Cooking your own food on site (eg. burgers or hot dogs).
 - Renting food carts (old fashioned food carts complete with attendants are available for rental),
 - Catering (event planning companies often have professional caterers that offer a variety of menus that can complement most picnic themes).
10. **Decorations / Supplies:** Most party stores have a complete supply of decorations and party supplies. Your decorations can help create an atmosphere to support your theme if you have one. A list of some items include:

Plates	Cups
Utensils	Tablecloth
Food / Drinks	Ice
Tubs for soft drinks	Canopy
Nametags	Megaphone
Trash Can / Bags	Balloons / Posters / Decorations
Tables / Chairs	Silcock Key (many parks require a silcock key to operate their faucets. These are available at most home supply centers. Check your park beforehand)

Many of these items can be ordered imprinted with your company logo / information. Check with your event planner if you are interested.

11. **Givaways / Gifts:** People love prizes! If you are hosting a raffle or bingo, nicer prizes are important. Options for prizes include:
- Logo-ed merchandise
 - Gift Catalogs
 - Gift Cards
 - Merchandise prizes

Other great prizes can include: time off from work, reserved parking spot, special lunch with the boss, or anything else people will appreciate. Your event coordinator can help you brainstorm ideas.

12. **Picnic time:** On the day of the picnic, make sure to have signs clearly posted so that your guests can find you; especially if your event is at a large park. If there are parking attendants, make sure to let them know so that they can direct your guests. If parking is an issue, reserving parking for your entertainers and caterers can be very helpful. Moving a parked car if necessary will allow your entertainers easy access to your event.

13. **Enjoy:** During the picnic, try to remain flexible and enjoy yourself. You worked hard planning this event. Things don't always go exactly as planned, but that's okay. Trust that your guests are having a great time!

Co-written by:

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Dwyane Faux – Dwyane has been helping companies plan and coordinate their picnics since 1990. He specializes in helping clients custom design complete themed picnic packages that are both entertaining and help promote corporate values such as teamwork. In addition to consulting for Auntie Roxie's Life of the Party, Dwyane also owns his own promotional products company and helps our clients find unique invitations, picnic apparel, and awards.